ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH GROUP

CANADIAN PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD OPTIONS FOR THE RELEASE OF CENSUS RECORDS

A Summary Report of Research
Conducted by Environics Research Group Limited

for the Expert Panel
on Access to Historical Census Records
and Statistics Canada

FINAL REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In November 1999, Environics Research Group Ltd. was retained by the Expert Panel on Access to Historical Census Records and Statistics Canada to conduct public opinion research, including focus groups and two national surveys, on the topic of the release of Census records. This report summarises the findings of the research.

The focus group research consisted of six sessions, including two pilot sessions in Ottawa in December 1999, two sessions in Toronto in January 2000 and two sessions in Montreal in January 2000. The first session in each city was made up of highly-educated Canadians and the second session was composed of participants with mid-level education. All sessions included a mix of genders, age groups (all 18 and over), occupations, and some foreign-born participants.

The first national survey was conducted by telephone, between March 28 and April 15, 2000, among a sample of 2,020 adult Canadians. The margin of error for a sample of this size is 2.2 percentage points, 19 times in 20.

The second national survey was conducted by telephone, between April 24 and April 30, 2000, among a sample of 1,032 adult Canadians. The margin of error for a sample of this size is 3.1 percentage points, 19 times in 20.

Appended to this report is a copy of the discussion agenda for the main sessions of the focus group study, as well as copies of the English questionnaires and descriptions of the survey methods for both surveys. The overall percentage distribution of results for both surveys are reported on the questionnaires.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Legislation in place is often interpreted to prohibit the release of individual-level census records for the 1906 and subsequent censuses. Genealogists, historians, and others have urged the federal government to permit the release of historical census records, arguing that the records have significant value as a source of information about Canada's past. Supporting the call for release of the data is the fact that individual-level census data from earlier censuses have been released without public criticism. As well, other countries, such as the United States, have made their individual census data available after a time delay. The time delay in other countries ranges between approximately 70 and 100 years.

On the other side, the relevant issues include growing concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of individual records in the context of the promise made by the Canadian government of the day, that it would not release those data. Also, releasing these data may erode public confidence in the government and in Statistics Canada and impair the ability of Statistics Canada to carry out its census and other data collection activities in the future.

In this context, the government has proposed two options for change. The first would involve allowing all census data collected in future censuses (2001 and forward) to be released after an appropriate time delay. Thus, Canadian residents who are completing their census forms in the future would know that their individual answers would be available to be released approximately 100 years or so hence. The second option would allow the release of 1906 and subsequent census data after an appropriate delay. Both options may involve changing the legislation to allow the eventual release of individual-level census data, but the second option is potentially more problematic for the government in that it might be seen as breaking a promise of confidentiality made to Canadians at the time the earlier censuses were taken.

The public opinion research was undertaken to probe these issues.

The focus group research explored and examined awareness of and response to the data release options and arguments for and against data release. It also examined the impact of changing the legislation on census and other data collection, including willingness to participate in a future census. All the focus group sessions included some testing of drafts of questionnaires for the first survey.

The first national survey focussed mainly on probing opinion on the arguments supporting the release of census data, focusing mainly on future data release, with one question on the retroactive release of individual-level data. It also explored the impact of changing legislation on census and other data collection, including willingness to participate in a future census.

The second national survey focused mainly on assessing public support for retroactive legislation that would allow the release of historical census data, with two questions on future data release. It also examined the impact of a retroactive change to the legislation on data collection, including willingness to participate in a future census.

3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The major findings of the research are:

- The focus group research revealed that there was virtually no public awareness of the topic of the release of individual-level census data.

- The focus group research and both surveys suggest that most Canadians would find it acceptable to release individual-level data from future censuses after a time delay of about 100 years.

- When it comes to the reasons to release individual census data, the public responds most favourably to the idea that their descendants would find such data useful or helpful. The public is less moved by the argument that these data should be released because historians find these data to be valuable and important for historical research.

- There is less public support for a retroactive amendment that would involve releasing individual-level data from past censuses. While the first national survey indicates some support for changing the legislation to allow the release of these data (31 percent of Canadians "strongly" approve of this and 37 percent "somewhat" approve), the second survey, which emphasised the legislated promise of confidentially in past censuses, shows less support for this (55 percent approve, 44 percent do not). The focus group discussions reveal a strong negative response to releasing historical census data that was collected with the promise of confidentiality.

- A majority of focus group participants and respondents in both surveys say their participation in the next census and the truthfulness of their answers would not be affected if they knew their individual answers would be released after a delay of about 100 years. However, the second survey shows that significant minorities would find this problematic, with 25 percent of Canadians surveyed saying that changing the legislation to allow for the release of historical census data would make them less likely to answer the next census, 19 percent saying they would be less likely to give accurate answers on the census, and 30 percent saying that their trust in Statistics Canada would drop.

4.0 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

4.1 General Awareness of Topic

Almost no participants in any of the six focus group sessions had heard about the topic of releasing individual-level census data for future or past censuses. A total of one or two participants in the Ottawa groups said they had heard of the topic, possibly because there had been a number of newspaper articles on the topic in the week or two preceding the Ottawa sessions.

4.2 Release of Future Census Data

Most participants thought it acceptable that their personal census information might be released after a time delay of about 100 years. However, a few participants strongly objected to the release of this information.

A variety of issues emerged in the focus groups:

- Many questioned the usefulness of such data - why would anyone be interested in personal answers after 100 years?

- A number of participants could not understand why anyone would need to know individual names.

Among the few who were opposed to the release of these data, the most common concerns were:

- Would this lead to more government control of individuals?

- Would the information be used against them at some point in the future?

- Would there be long-term consequences of disclosure for future family members in areas such as ethnicity, race, and health?

Many participants said that they were not aware of the content of the questions in the census. When, in some of the sessions, the moderator described to them the questions contained in the 1996 census, the description raised several reactions:

- Most felt it would be non-problematic for them if this type of information were released 100 years after a census was taken.

- Some participants felt that the type of questions asked were "basic" ones and would be of little value for future historians or genealogists.

- Some said that there are other richer data sources for individuals available in both the public and private sectors.

- A few voiced a concern that in future censuses, once the principle of disclosing information is established, a series of new questions, more personal or intrusive, would progressively be added to the census.

Participants were presented with a number of arguments supporting the release of the individual-level data from future censuses after a time delay of about 100 years.

When participants were presented with the argument that historians would find the information extremely valuable, most participants reaffirmed their scepticism concerning the validity or usefulness of the information for historians.

Participants were more receptive to the argument that their information might be useful for their descendants. However, some felt that their own personal interest in knowing about their family origins was low and this would probably be the same for their descendants.

Although many were fairly open to releasing this information for "medical" purposes, some were sceptical as to whether the kind of information available in the census would be of any value. They felt that hospital or doctor's records would be much more useful as a source of medical information.

Most participants were open to the idea of changing the existing law to allow future census data on individuals to be released after 100 years. However, some felt that people participating in future censuses should be given an option, such as a check-off box, to indicate consent. Others felt there should be conditions placed on the release of this information.

A few participants expressed concern about this issue. They felt that if the government is ready to rescind an existing law, what would stop the government from modifying a future

one and reducing the 100 year prescription for future censuses? They were also fearful of who would have access to the data in the future and that it might be used against them in some undefined way, or against their descendants.

4.3 Release of Historical Census Data

The vast majority of focus group participants responded negatively to the prospect of allowing the release of individual answers from earlier censuses including the 1911 census, after a time delay of about 100 years. The response was negative toward the principle of release as well as to changing legislation to allow the release.

Most focus group participants felt that the government had made a promise of confidentiality and that this should be respected. People who answered those censuses believed their answers would be confidential, and thus it would be a breach of promise to release the information.

In some of the focus group sessions, as soon as the notion of "breaking a promise" emerged, the idea was seized upon by other participants who then expressed their opposition to release. Keeping these data as confidential came to be seen as the "right" or moral thing to do.

Historical and genealogical reasons for releasing historical data were not powerful or even helpful in changing opinion, and participants reiterated many of the same doubts expressed earlier. When informed that historical census data were a unique data source for historians, some participants stated that there are other sources, such as local churches and schools, for historical information, so these data are not so critical. Some also felt that the information contained in the 1911 census would really be of little interest to historians. But even among those who accepted the idea that the data may be valuable for these purposes, this was not enough justification, in their opinion, to warrant the release of the data.

However, a number of participants suggested that the information could be made available to specialists (historians, genealogists) under special request and/or that the access to an individual record should be limited to the close family or descendants of that person.

Some participants were moved by the argument that this kind of data release has already occurred in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, but others felt this was not relevant and that Canada should develop its own approach to the issue.

4.4 Impact of Change

Most participants said that a change in the law to allow the release of future census data at the individual-level would not affect their participation in the next census or the truthfulness of their answers on that census or other future censuses. However, some people expressed the view that <u>others</u> would be more inclined to be untruthful. Only a very small number said that they themselves might be more inclined to give untruthful answers.

The vast majority of participants said that this change would not affect their opinion of Statistics Canada.

5.0 FIRST NATIONAL SURVEY

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were informed that a census is held in Canada every five years and that the next one will be held in 2001. Everyone in Canada is required by law to answer the census. Individual names, addresses, and social and economic data for each member of the household are collected by the census, and the resulting information is combined together and analysed to produce overall statistics.

They were also informed that in the last census in 1996, all households provided information including, name, address, the relationship of people in the household to each other, date of birth, sex and marital status. Some households also provided information about disabilities, language use, places of work, citizenship, ethnic group, education, labour market activities, income and others.

5.1 Confidentiality of Census Information

When probed, just under six in ten Canadians (57%) believe Statistics Canada keeps personal census information, such as your name, address and answers, confidential. A significant proportion, 35 percent, do not think this information is kept confidential. Seven percent offer no opinion.

Better educated Canadians and those aged 18 to 29 are slightly more likely than others to think Statistics Canada keeps personal census information confidential.

5.2 Reasons to Release Personal Census Information

Respondents were told that some people think that personal census information, including an individual's name, address and answers on the census should be made available to the public after a time delay of approximately 100 years after a census is held.

When offered three reasons for the release of personal census information about 100 years after a census is taken, large majorities overall think all three are good reasons for the release of this information. The proportions who say each is a very good reason, however, vary between only 41 percent and 60 percent.

The most widely acceptable reason for releasing these data is so that descendants can learn about health status. More than eight in ten Canadians (83%) think it is a very good (60%) or somewhat good (23%) reason to release personal census information so that their descendants, such as grandchildren or others, might be able to trace through their family tree to learn the health status of their ancestors to help resolve some health issues that may arise in their family. Seventeen percent think this is not a good reason.

Tracing family ties is also a popular reason to release individual-level data. Eight in ten (79%) think it is a very good (50%) or somewhat good (29%) reason to release personal census information so that their descendants, such as grandchildren, might be able to learn who their ancestors were or learn something about the respondent that they couldn't find from other sources. Twenty percent think this is not a good reason.

More than seven in ten (75%) think it is a very good (41%) or somewhat good (34%) reason to release personal census information so that future historians can use the information to better understand Canadian society today. Twenty-four percent think this is not a good reason.

Atlantic Canadians are more likely than others to think that reasons dealing with benefits to descendants are very good reasons for the release of personal census information. Ontarians are more receptive than others to historical research, while Quebecers are less likely to think that any of these are very good reasons to release personal census information.

Less educated and less affluent Canadians are more likely than others to be receptive to reasons concerning benefits to descendants while older Canadians are more receptive to historical research.

5.3 Support for Releasing Future Personal Census Information

Three-quarters of Canadians (76%) say they strongly (41%) or somewhat (35%) agree with allowing their personal census information to be made available to historians, to those interested in family history and to the public, about 100 years after a census is held. Twenty-three percent disagree.

Residents of Atlantic Canada, British Columbia and Ontario are more likely than others to strongly agree with allowing their personal census information to be made available about 100 years after a census is held. Strong agreement is lower among residents of Saskatchewan and Quebec, and is higher among older Canadians.

Respondents were told that, at the present time, a law is in place that guarantees that an individual's name, address and responses to census questions are kept confidential by Statistics Canada.

When asked their opinion about changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future personal census information, there is majority, but more tentative, support. Seven in ten Canadians (69%) strongly (32%) or somewhat (37%) approve of the government changing the law to allow the release of personal census information 100 years after a census is taken. Thirty percent disapprove of this.

Strong approval of changing existing legislation is slightly lower in Saskatchewan, and slightly higher among older Canadians.

5.4 Release of Historical Personal Census Information

There is majority, but rather tentative, support for changing existing legislation to allow for the release of historical personal census information. When informed that the law guaranteeing the confidentiality of individual names and answers collected in the census has been in place for every census since the 1906 census, just under seven in ten (68%) strongly (31%) or somewhat (37%) approve of the government changing the law to allow the release of personal census information from past censuses after a delay of about 100 years. Thirty percent disapprove of this.

Strong approval is slightly lower in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and somewhat higher among older Canadians.

5.5 Impact of Legislative Change on Data Collection

When asked what would be the impact on aspects of data collection, including participation in the next census, if the government were to change the law so that their personal census information would be available about 100 years after a census was held, large majorities say that this legislative change would have no impact.

A total of 13 percent of Canadians say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to answer the next census. Another 18 percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A large majority of 68 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to their answering the next census.

A total of 11 percent say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to give accurate answers to the next census. Another 22 percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A large majority of 65 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to the accuracy of their answers on the next census.

A total of 19 percent say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to participate in other Statistics Canada surveys. Another 18 percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A large majority of 62 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to their participation in other Statistics Canada surveys.

A total of 15 percent say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to trust Statistics Canada. Another 22 percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A large majority of 65 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to their trust in Statistics Canada.

Albertans are more likely than others to say that changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to do any of these things. Canadians aged 18 to 29 and those aged 60 and older and less affluent Canadians are slightly more likely than others to say the change will increase the likelihood of doing any of these things. Less educated Canadians are slightly more inclined to say this legislative change will make them more likely to answer the next census and to trust Statistics Canada.

6.0 SECOND NATIONAL SURVEY

At the beginning of this survey, respondents were again informed that a census is held every five years and the next one will be in 2001. Everyone in Canada is required by law to answer the census. They were also told that in the last census in 1996, all Canadians provided their name, address, the relationship of people in the household to each other, date of birth, sex and marital status. Some households also answered census questions about their disabilities, language use, citizenship, ethnicity, education, labour market activities and income.

6.1 Confidentiality of Census Information

In this survey, a similar number, 54 percent, believe Statistics Canada keeps personal census information, such as your name, address and answers, confidential. A significant proportion, 38 percent, do not think this information is kept confidential. Eight percent offer no opinion.

6.2 Support for Releasing Future Personal Census Information

Without probing reasons for the release of data, the second survey finds less support than the first for releasing future data. Here, 55 percent of Canadians say they approve of this, compared to 76 percent who agreed, in total, in the first survey. Here, 43 percent disapprove, compared to 23 percent who disagreed with this data release in the first survey.

6.3 Release of Historical Census Information

In this second survey respondents were informed that since 1918, the Statistics Act has guaranteed that all personal census information is kept strictly confidential with no time limit on how long this information is to be kept confidential. In collecting past census information, Statistics Canada assured Canadians that their personal census information would never be released.

They were also told that historians and people interested in family and community history want the law changed so that personal census information collected on past censuses would be made available to the public after a delay of about 100 years.

After being told this information, and also informed that in order to release this past personal census information, the government will have to change the law that guaranteed this confidentiality, a total of 55 percent say they approve of the government changing the law to permit personal census information that was collected with a guarantee of confidentiality to be released to the public after about 100 years. A significant number (44%) disapprove of this. Again, support for this concept is lower in this second survey than in the first.

When respondents are presented with two points of view about the release of historical data, opinion is evenly divided. Just under one-half (49%) agree with the view that the government made a promise to Canadians that it would never release their personal census information and that the government should keep this promise. An almost identical number (48%) agree with the view that it is more important for historians and those interested in family history to have this information and that personal census information should be released even if it means changing the law.

6.4 Impact of Legislative Change on Data Collection

When asked what would be the impact on various aspects of data collection, including participation in the next census, if the government were to change the law to allow the eventual release of personal census information that it had guaranteed would remain confidential, majorities continue to say that this legislative change would have no impact. However, higher proportions in this survey than in the first survey, say they would be less likely to participate in, and accurately complete the next census, and more say their trust in Statistics Canada would drop. The question wording in the second survey, focussing on changing the legislation to allow the release of data that had been collected with a guarantee of confidentiality, can account for the change.

A significant proportion, 25 percent of Canadians, say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of historical census information would make them less likely to answer the next census. Only five percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A total of 69 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to their answering the next census.

Nineteen percent say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to give accurate answers on the next census. Only nine percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A total of 70 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to the accuracy of their answers on the next census.

A significant proportion, 30 percent, say changing existing legislation to allow for the release of future census information would make them less likely to trust Statistics Canada. Only seven percent say this would make them more likely to do this. A total of 62 percent say this legislative change would make no difference to their trust in Statistics Canada.

Focus Group Discussion Agenda

January 27, 2000

Discussion Agenda - Phase 2- Revised
PN 4588

Introduction to Procedures (2 minutes)

This study is commissioned by Statistics Canada.

Introduction to focus group procedures.
We want your opinion.
Feel free to agree or disagree and express your views freely.
You are being audio taped and observed.
Your individual comments will not be linked to you.
The receptionist will pay you at the end of the session.

Written Exercise - test draft questionnaire

Here are some questions I want you to look at. Please read through these questions and take the time to answer them, and we will discuss them after you are finished. **(Complete questionnaire)**

Now let's discuss the questions overall.

Now let's discuss each question individually. **(Discuss each question including introductions.)**

Please hand in your completed questionnaire.

Discussion of Topic

I would like you to set aside these materials to discuss our topic.

Recently, there has been some discussion about releasing census data on individuals after a time delay. Has anyone heard or read anything about this before this evening?

Canadians have been participating in filling out the census for 3 centuries. The overall data on population figures and other measures have always been released, but some people think that the data collected for individuals from censuses should be made available after a time delay of about 100 years so that historians and other people with an interest in family history such as your descendants can use this information to understand more about the past. What is your response to this? How do you feel about allowing your personal census information to be available after this time delay?

Why do you say that? Does the number of years make a difference?

Test Arguments in Favour of Release

1. Information about individuals from the census is considered by historians to be a valuable source of information about Canadian history.

2. Individuals such as your descendants and others who are interested in their family's origins would be able to learn about who their ancestors were or to learn something about their family that they might not be able to learn elsewhere.

Historical Data Release

1. At the present time, a law is in place that ensures that individual answers and data from all censuses since 1911 cannot be released. What do you think about changing the law to allow the release of individual answers from these earlier censuses, after a time delay? Why do you say that?

2. Are there good reasons to change the law to allow this information to be released? (Value to historians, value to you or others who are interested in family history?)

3. Would the government be breaking a promise to past generations if it changed the law and allowed the information to be released?

Future Release Option

What do you think about changing the law to allow future census data on individuals to be released after 100 years? Does it make a difference for people to know beforehand that the information would be released in the future?

What about the option of allowing individuals to consent to do this?

Impact of Change

1. If the government were to change the law and allow the release of this historical data and future individual data, would this change your likelihood of participating in the next census?

2. Would it affect the accuracy of the information you provide on the census?

3. Would it change your opinion of Statistics Canada?

Thank you for your participation.

First Survey

Environics Research Group Limited
Statscan - Census Data Release
Summary - PN4630
N=2020
Fieldwork March 28-April 15, 2000

Here are some questions about Statistics Canada and the census. As you may know, a census is held in Canada every five years and the next one will be held in 2001. Everyone in Canada is required by law to answer the census. Individual names, addresses, and social and economic data for each member of the household are collected by the census, and the resulting information is combined together and analyzed to produce overall statistics.

In the last census in 1996, all households provided information including name, address, the relationship of people in the household to each other, date of birth, sex and marital status. Some households also provided information about disabilities, language use, places of work, citizenship, ethnic origin, education, labour market activities, income and others.

1. D Do you think Statistics Canada keeps your name, address and answers on the census questionnaire confidential?

Yes	57%
No	35%
DK/NA	7%

2. D Some people think that personal census information including an individual's name, address and answers on the census should be made available to the public after a time delay of approximately 100 years after a census is held.

Please tell me if you think each of the following is a very good reason, somewhat good reason, not very good reason or not at all a good reason to allow the release of your personal census information about 100 years after a census is taken. **READ AND ROTATE**

		Very good reason	Somewhat good reason	Not very good reason	Not at all a good reason	DK/NA
( ) So that future historians can use the information to better understand Canadian society today	a.	41%	34%	12%	12%	1%
( ) So that your descendants, such as your grandchildren, might be able to learn who their ancestors were or learn something about you that they couldn't find from other sources?	b.	50	29	9	11	1
( ) So that your descendants, such as your grandchildren or others, might be able to trace through their family tree to learn the health status of their ancestors to help resolve some health issues that may arise in their family?	c.	60	23	7	10	*

3. D Thinking about yourself, would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with allowing your personal census information to be made available to historians, to those interested in family history and to the public about 100 years after a census is held?

Strongly agree	41%
Somewhat agree	35%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	15%
DK/NA	1%

At the present time, a law is in place that guarantees that an individual's name, address and responses to census questions are kept confidential by Statistics Canada.

4. D Would you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of the government changing the law to allow the release of personal census information 100 years after a census is taken?

Strongly approve	32%
Somewhat approve	37%
Somewhat disapprove	10%
Strongly disapprove	20%
DK/NA	1%

5. D The law guaranteeing the confidentiality of individual names and answers collected in the census has been in place for every census since the 1906 Census. Would you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of the government changing the law to allow the release of personal census information from past censuses after a delay of about 100 years?

Strongly approve	31%
Somewhat approve	37%
Somewhat disapprove	9%
Strongly disapprove	21%
DK/NA	2%

6. D If the government were to change the law so that your personal census information would be available about 100 years after a census was held, would you be more likely to answer the next census, less likely to answer the next census, or would it make no difference to your answering the next census?

More likely	18%
Less likely	13%
Make no difference	68%
OTHER	1%
DK/NA	1%

7. D If the government were to change the law so that your personal census information would be available about 100 years after a census was held, would you be more likely to give accurate answers to the next census, would you be less likely to give accurate answers to the next census, or would it make no difference to the accuracy of your answers on the next census?

More likely	22%
Less likely	11%
Make no difference	65%
OTHER	*
DK/NA	1%

8. D If the government were to change the law so that your personal census information would be available about 100 years after a census was held, would you be more likely to participate in other Statistics Canada surveys, would you be less likely to participate in other Statistics Canada surveys, or would it make no difference to your participation in other Statistics Canada surveys?

More likely	18%
Less likely	19%
Make no difference	62%
OTHER	*
DK/NA	1%

9. D If the government were to change the law so that your personal census information would be available about 100 years after a census was held, would you be more likely to trust Statistics Canada, would you be less likely to trust Statistics Canada, or would it make no difference to your trust in Statistics Canada?

More likely	15%
Less likely	20%
Make no difference	64%
OTHER	*
DK/NA	1%

Survey Methods: First Survey

The results of the survey are derived from 2,020 telephone interviews conducted between March 28 and April 15, 2000: 240 in the Atlantic provinces, 500 in Quebec, 557 in Ontario and 723 in the Western provinces.

Sample Selection

The sampling method was designed to complete approximately 2,000 interviews within households randomly selected across Canada. It is drawn in such a way that it represents the Canadian population aged 18 years or older with the exception of those Canadians living in the Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut or in institutions (armed forces barracks, hospitals, prisons).

The sampling model relies on stratification of the population by ten regions (Atlantic, Montreal CMA, the rest of Quebec, Toronto CMA, the rest of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Vancouver CMA and the rest of British Columbia) and by four community sizes (1,000,000 inhabitants or more, 100,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants, 5,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, and under 5,000 inhabitants).

The sample also relies on a gender quota, an age quota and a working woman quota.

Environics uses a modified Waksburg Mitofsky sample selection technique. Telephone numbers are selected from the most recently published telephone directories. These numbers act as "seeds" from which the sample is actually generated. The original "seed" telephone number is not used in the sample. The Waksburg Mitofsky sample selection technique ensures both unlisted numbers and numbers listed after the directory publication are included in the sample.

A total of 28,857 telephone numbers were drawn. From within each multiperson household contacted, respondents 18 years of age and older were screened for random selection using the "Most recent birthday" method. The use of this technique produces results that are as valid and effective as enumerating all persons within a household and selecting one randomly.

Telephone Interviewing

Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. Ten percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Association of Marketing Research Organizations.

A minimum of five calls were made to a household before classifying it as a "no answer."

Margin of Error

The margin of error for a stratified probability sample of this size is estimated to be ± 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is greater for results pertaining to regional or socio-demographic sub-groups of the total sample.

Completion Results

A total of 2,020 interviews were completed. The following table presents the detailed completion results.

In the data analysis, the results are weighted to reflect the actual population sizes of the provinces.

	N
Number of calls	28,857
Household not eligible	880
Non-residential/not in service	11,291
Language barrier	879
Subtotal	13,050
New Base (28,857 - 13,050)	15,807
No answer/line busy/ respondent not available	5,630
Refusals	7,880
Mid-interview terminations	277
Subtotal	13,787
Net Completions (15,807 - 13,787)	2,020

Second Survey

Environics Research Group Limited

PN4658
N=1032
Fieldwork: April 24-30, 2000

Here are some questions about Statistics Canada and the census. As you may know, a census is held every five years and the next one will be in 2001. Everyone in Canada is required by law to answer the census.

In the last census in 1996, all Canadians provided their name, address, the relationship of people in the household to each other, date of birth, sex and marital status. Some households also answered census questions about their disabilities, language use, citizenship, ethnicity, education, labour market activities and income.

1. Do you think Statistics Canada keeps your name, address and answers on the census questionnaire confidential?

Yes	54%
No	38%
DK/NA	8%

2. From now on, would you approve or disapprove of the government releasing your personal census information to the public after about one hundred years?

Approve	55%
Disapprove	43%
DK/NA	2%

In fact, since 1918, the Statistics Act has guaranteed that all personal census information is kept strictly confidential with no time limit on how long this information is to be kept confidential. In collecting past census information, Statistics Canada assured Canadians that their personal census information would never be released.

Historians and people interested in family and community history want the law changed so that personal census information collected on past censuses would be made available to the public after a delay of about 100 years.

3. In order to release past personal census information, the government will have to change the law that guaranteed this confidentiality. Do you approve or disapprove of the government changing the law to permit personal census information that was collected with a guarantee of confidentiality to be released to the public after about 100 years.

Approve	55%
Disapprove	44%
DK/NA	1%

4. Some people say that the government made a promise to Canadians that it would never release their personal census information and that the government should keep this promise. Other people say it is more important for historians and those interested in family history to have this information and that personal census information should be released even if it means changing the law. Which point of view is closer to your own?

Keep promise	49%
Release information	48%
DK/NA	2%

5. If the government were to change the law to allow the eventual release of personal census information that they had guaranteed would remain confidential, would this make you more likely to answer the next census, less likely to answer the next census or would it make no difference?

More likely	5%
Less likely	25%
Make no difference	69%
DK/NA	2%

6. If the government were to change the law to allow the eventual release of personal census information that they had guaranteed would remain confidential, would you be more likely to give accurate answers on the next census, less likely to give accurate answers on the next census or would it make no difference to the accuracy of your answers on the next census?

More likely	9%
Less likely	19%
Make no difference	70%
DK/NA	2%

7. If the government were to change the law to allow the eventual release of personal census information that they had guaranteed would remain confidential, would you be more likely to trust Statistics Canada, less likely to trust Statistics Canada, or would it make no difference to your trust in Statistics Canada?

More likely	7%
Less likely	30%
Make no difference	62%
DK/NA	1%

Survey Methods

The results of the survey are based on questions asked to 1,032 Canadians 18 years of age and older living within the ten provinces of Canada. The survey was conducted by telephone from April 24 to 30, 2000.

Sample Selection

The sampling method was designed to complete approximately 1,000 interviews within households randomly selected across Canada. It is drawn in such a way that it represents the Canadian population with the exception of those Canadians living in the Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut.

The sampling model relies on the stratification of the population by ten provinces and by six community sizes (1,000,000 inhabitants or more, 100,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants, 25,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, 10,000 to 25,000 inhabitants, 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants and under 5,000 inhabitants).

Telephone Interviewing

Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. Ten percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Association of Marketing Research Organizations.

A minimum of four calls were made to a household before classifying it as a "no answer."

Completion Results

A total of 1,032 interviews were completed. The following table presents the detailed completion results.

The margin of error for a sample of 1,032 is ±3.1 percentage points, 19 times in 20. The margins are wider for demographic subsamples.

	#
Number of calls	17,362
Household not eligible	527
Non-residential/not in service	5,975
Language barrier	366
Subtotal	6,868
New Base (17,362-6,868)	10,494
No answer/line busy/ respondent not available	5,467
Refusals	3,877
Mid-interview refusals	118
Subtotal	9,462
Net Completions (10,494-9,462)	1,032